

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-16, 18, 21 and 24 were previously cancelled. Claims 17, 19, 20, 23, 25, 26 and 27 are currently amended. Claims 22 and 29 are currently cancelled. Claim 28 is carried forward, all as follows.

Claims 1-16 (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) A folding apparatus comprising:

a spur cylinder having a spur cylinder circumferential shell surface and a first direction of rotation;

a folding jaw cylinder cooperating with said spur cylinder and defining a transfer gap in cooperation with said spur cylinder;

at least one spur strip on said spur cylinder and having a plurality of spur needles adapted to releasably hold ~~a leading ends-end of~~ at least first and second signatures ~~a first signature~~ during passage of said at least one spur strip through said transfer gap, said plurality of spur needles selectively extending radially outwardly beyond said spur cylinder circumferential shell surface to releasably hold said leading end of each said signature during passage through said transfer gap and retracting radially inwardly beneath said spur cylinder circumferential shell surface to release said leading end of each said signature after passage through said cylinder gap for transfer of each said signature to said folding jaw cylinder;

at least one deflector on said spur cylinder and having a deflector strip usable selectively to cover said spur needles on said at least one spur strip, and to expose said spur needles on said at least one spur strip; and

means for moving said at least one deflector between a spur needle exposing position, wherein said at least one deflector strip is retracted in said spur cylinder to expose said spur needles during passage of said spur needles and said leading end of each said signature

through said transfer gap, and a spur needle covering position wherein said at least one deflector strip is extended radially from said spur cylinder and circumferentially with respect to said spur needle circumferential shell surface to cover said spur needles and a leading end of each said signature, said at least one deflector strip being movable from said spur needle exposing retracted position, during passage of said at least one spur strip and each said signature leading end through said transfer gap, to said spur needle covering extended position, covering said spur needles and each said signature leading end, in response to rotation of said spur cylinder and subsequent to passage of said at least one spur strip with each said signature leading end and said at least one deflector strip through said transfer gap, said at least one deflector strip, in said spur needle covering extended position shielding said extended spur needles from contact with a released leading end of a prior one of said signatures during retrograde movement of said prior signature leading end along said spur cylinder circumferential shell surface opposite to said spur cylinder direction of rotation.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Currently Amended) The folding apparatus of claim 17 further including a second spur strip on said spur cylinder and wherein said at least one deflector strip, in said spur needle covering extended position, is arranged between a trailing-an end-section of said-a released prior-first signature, and extended spur needles of said-a second spur strip, said second spur strip engaging said second signature leading end and being located subsequent to said at least one spur strip on said spur cylinder in said-a direction of rotation of said spur cylinder.

20. (Currently Amended) The folding apparatus of claim 17 wherein said spur cylinder has an axis of rotation and further wherein said at least one deflector strip has a length which extends parallel to said spur cylinder axis of rotation.

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Currently Amended) The folding apparatus of claim ~~19~~ 17 further including a second spur strip adapted to releasably hold a leading end of a second signature and wherein said at least one deflector is positioned before, in ~~said~~ a direction of rotation of said spur cylinder, said second spur strip.

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Currently Amended) The folding apparatus of claim 17 wherein said at least one spur strip and said at least one deflector strip are retracted after release of said leading end of each ~~said-first~~ signature after passage of said leading end of each ~~said-first~~ signature beyond said transfer gap.

26. (Currently Amended) The folding apparatus of claim 17 wherein said at least one deflector strip includes an inclined face, said inclined face of said at least one deflector strip extending radially from a shell face of said spur cylinder and circumferentially opposite to ~~said~~ a direction of rotation of said spur cylinder.

27. (Currently Amended) The folding apparatus of claim 17 further including a straight line extending between axes of rotation of said spur cylinder and said folding jaw cylinder and ~~wherein~~ said deflector, in said spur needle covering, extended position, being arranged within

an angular range of between 30° and 60° with respect to said straight line and after said transfer gap in said-a direction of rotation of said spur cylinder.

28. (Previously Presented) The folding apparatus of claim 27 wherein said angular range is between 30° and 45°.

29. (Cancelled)